

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY:AF/ E:GDKULICK:CRJ

APPROVED BY:P:MR SISCO

AF:MR EASUM

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S/S-MR LUERS

PM: MR SMITH (INFO)

----- 109730

O R 182128Z DEC 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - MISSING LINE PARA TWO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET US MASS

SUBJECT: EASUM-KIFLE MEETING, DEC 16

REF: DEPTTEL 274799

1. FOREIGN MINISTER-DESIGNATE KIFLE CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM DEC 16. KIFLE SAID EPMG HAD ASKED HIM TO CLARIFY U.S. POLICIES REGARDING MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN LIGHT OF REPORTS THAT EXISTING PROGRAMS WERE "UNDER REVIEW" AND THAT NO NEW COMMITMENTS WERE BEING MADE. KIFLE SAID HE REALIZED THAT U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION WAS CRITICAL OF EXECUTIONS AND THAT THIS UNDERSTANDABLY HAD AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON U.S. POLICIES AND ACTIONS. IT WAS IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THAT THE USG CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON THE PERMANENT INTERESTS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES DURING THIS VERY "FLUID PERIOD" IN ETHIOPIA.

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2. EASUM ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PUBLIC REACTION HAD BEEN ADVERSE. HE SAID THIS WAS A REFLECTION OF THE HIGH REGARD AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS FELT TOWARD ETHIOPIA AND THEIR HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF THAT COUNTRY. THE UNITED STATES WANTS TO CONTINUE WITH THE NEW AND EMERGING REGIME IN ETHIOPIA THE CLOSE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS WE HAVE ENJOYED WITH PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. AT THIS POINT,

HOWEVER, WE LACK INFORMATION AS TO THE NATURE OF THE NEW REGIME AND WHAT SORT OF RELATIONSHIP IT DESIRES TO HAVE WITH THE UNITED STATES. UNTIL WE HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE, WE MUST CONTINUE TO REVIEW THE SITUATION CAREFULLY.

3. KIFLE URGED THAT THE U.S. NOT ADOPT A PASSIVE ROLE VIS-A-VIS ETHIOPIA. HE URGED THAT EMBASSY ADDIS BE INSTRUCTED TO MAINTAIN DAY-TO-DAY CONTACT AND TO CONTINUE TO PROBE SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT U.S. INDIFFERENCE COULD DISCOURAGE MODERATES AND THOSE IN REGIME DESIRING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH U.S. WHILE ADMITTING THAT EARLIER INDICATIONS OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR AMAN HAD NOT PREVENTED HIS DOWNFALL, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE MEASURED U.S. RESPONSE TO EXECUTIONS, AS CONTRASTED WITH AN EMOTIONAL OVERREACTION, MAY WELL HAVE PREVENTED FURTHER EXCESSES.

4. KIFLE SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO CONTINUE MAP NEGOTIATIONS PREVIOUSLY INITIATED AND TO EXPEDITE DELIVERY OF MATERIEL NOW IN PIPELINE. IT WAS CLEAR, HE SAID, THAT PMG WISHES TO MAINTAIN ITS MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID HE PLANNED TO RESUME CONTACTS WITH PENTAGON CONCERNING MATERIEL ACQUISITIONS UNDER DOLS 8.3 MILLION FMS CREDIT OFFER. MEANWHILE HE HOPED FOR A CLARIFICATION OF BASIC U.S. POLICY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. EASUM REPLIED THAT HE SHARED KIFLE'S BELIEF IN IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS IN VIEW OF OUR COMMON INTERESTS. WE UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED THE EPMG'S CONTINUING DESIRE TO RECEIVE U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE. AS KIFLE WAS WELL

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AWARE, WE WERE KEEPING OUR PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW IN THE LIGHT OF THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA. WITH REGARD TO KIFLE'S DESIRE TO RESUME CONTACTS WITH THE PENTAGON, EASUM WAS NONCOMMITTAL BUT INDICATED HE CONSIDERED IT SOMEWHAT PREMATURE TO RESUME SUCH DISCUSSIONS. HE SAID HE WOULD KEEP IN TOUCH WITH KIFLE.

6. WITH REGARD TO ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE EASUM SAID THAT AID

BILL NOW IN FINAL STAGES OF CONSIDERATION ON HILL. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT ETHIOPIA MIGHT ARISE, BUT WE DID NOT ANTICIPATE MAJOR PROBLEMS.

7. ON SUBJECT OF PMG'S CURRENT POLICY TOWARD ERITREA, KIFLE SAID HE THOUGHT PMAC WAS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS REGARDING MASSIVE "PROGRESS THROUGH COOPERATION" CAMPAIGN AND RADICAL LAND REFORM. HE THOUGHT THEY HAD NOT OPTED IRREVOCABLY FOR MILITARY SOLUTION IN ERITREA AND THAT CONTACTS WITH ELF WERE STILL BEING SOUGHT.

8. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AS TO WHAT HIS PERSONAL PLANS WERE, KIFLE SAID HE EXPECTED TO BE IN WASHINGTON FOR ANOTHER 3-4 WEEKS TO CONDUCT FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

9. IN SUMMATION, KIFLE AGAIN URGED US TO KEEP OUR PERMANENT INTERESTS IN MIND IN SETTING COURSE OF U.S.-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS, AND NOT BE SWAYED BY "TEMPORARY PROBLEMS DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD". EASUM SAID WE WOULD CONTINUE TO WATCH ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MUTUAL INTEREST IN FRIENDLY AND BENEFICIAL RELATIONS.

10. WE SEE NO RPT NO NEED FOR YOU TO REPORT THIS CONVERSATION TO PMG. KISSINGER

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